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DJ Dimension 'minor breach' only rule-breaking during self-isolation programme

Laura Walters • 16:19, Jan 06 2022



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The case was revealed as UK musician Robert Etheridge, known professionally as DJ Dimension.

MARIKA KHABAZI/RNZ

MIQ is getting about 10 times the number of infected arrivals with Omicron than it was used to managing before the variant appeared.

Etheridge had left self-isolation on day 10 – before receiving the results of his day nine test – and visited public areas, including a jewellery store and a nightclub.

The rules required those isolating to receive a negative day nine test result, before finishing their three-day self-isolation period.

This breach led to many questioning the rigour of the self-isolation system. This is the system the Government plans to rely on as it inevitably relaxes strict border measures and MIQ reliance.

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The concern about rule-breaking was somewhat validated by comments from the Covid-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins, in a press conference about Etheridge's self-isolation breach.

On December 30, Hipkins told reporters there was no tolerance for rule-breaking, but he accepted there would be more breaches when using the trust-based self-isolation system.

ROSS GIBLIN/STUFF

Chris Hipkins told the country to prepare for more self-isolation breaches as NZ moves away from a full reliance on MIQ, to the trust-based self-isolation system.

But a Ministry of Health spokesperson said Etheridge's breach was "minor", and it was the only known case of a self-isolation breach under the three-day self-isolation system.

"Self-isolation for recent arrivals has operated under a high-trust model which relied on participants following strict guidelines, including not leaving their place of isolation, getting a day nine test and waiting for a negative result before leaving isolation," the spokesperson said.

While one minor breach [Etheridge] was reported, given the nature of the breach, it was unlikely any enforcement action would be taken, they said.

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While the programme's short stint did not highlight any obvious holes in the system, New Zealand has had its fair share of rule-breakers since the beginning of the pandemic.